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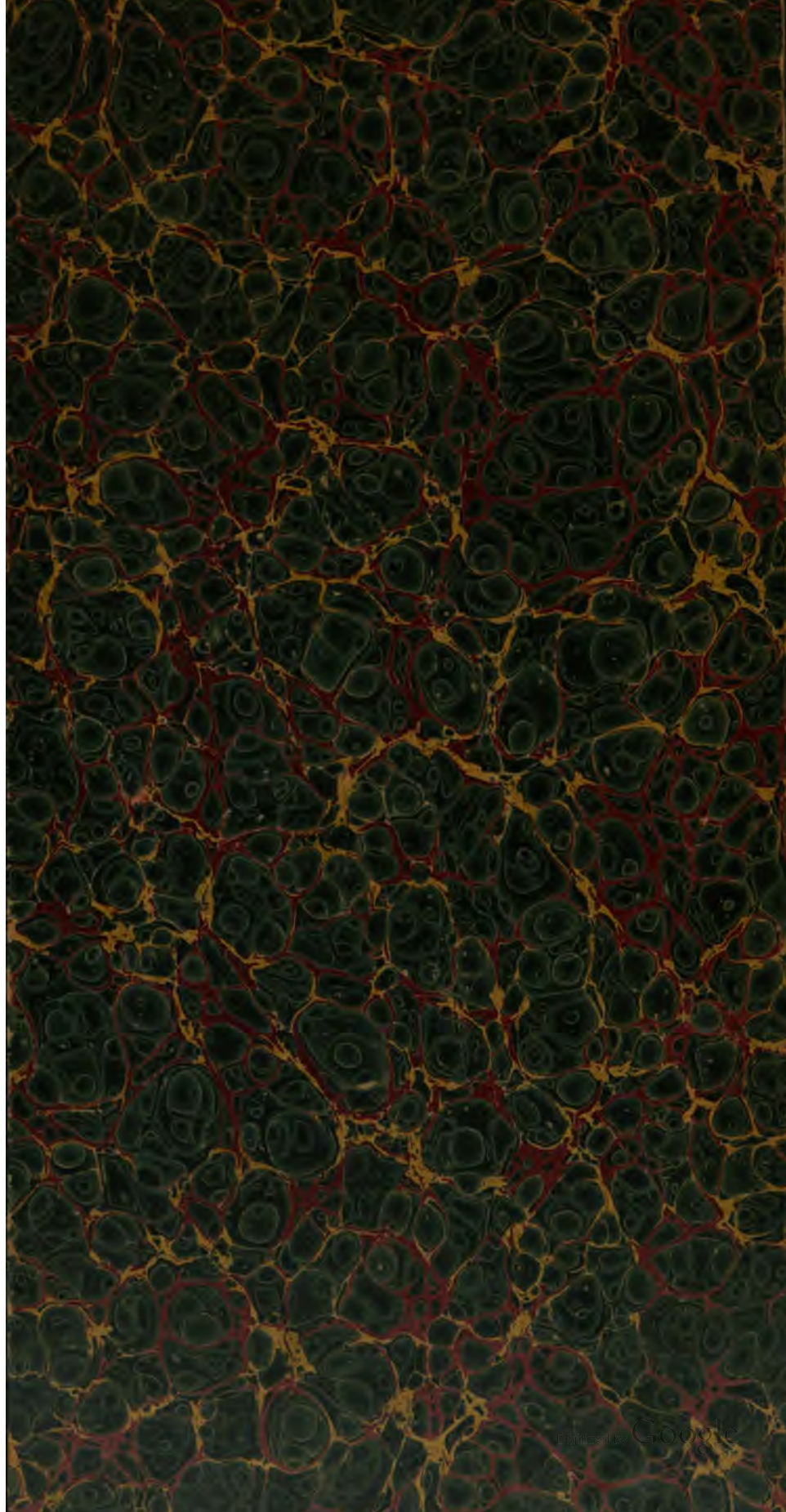
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IPHIGENIA in TAURIS,

A TRAGEDY,

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN GERMAN BY

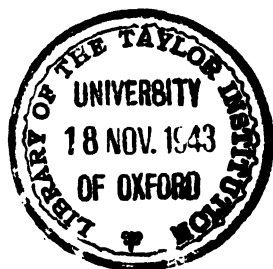
J. W. von GOETHE.

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M DCC XCIII.



PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

IPHIGENIA.

THOAS, King of the Taurians.

ARKAS, a Taurian Chieftain.

ORESTES.

PYLADES.

*SCENE, A wood surrounding the Temple of
Diana ; a distant glimpse of the sea.*

IPHIGENIA in TAURIS.

IPHIGENIA,

BENEATH your waving shade, ye restless boughs
of this long-hallow'd venerable wood,
as in the silent sanctuary's gloom,
I wander still with the same chilly awe
as when I enter'd first : in vain my soul
attempts to feel itself no stranger to you.
A mightier will, to whose behest I bow,
for years hath kept me here in deep concealment;
yet now it seems as foreign as at first.
For, ah ! the sea, from those I love, divides me ;
and on its shore I stand the live-long day
seeking, with yearning soul, the Grecian coast,

B

while

while the waves only echo back my sighs
in hoarser murmurs. O how luckless he,
who from his parents and his brethren far
lonesome abides ! The' approaching cup of joy
the hand of sorrow pushes from his lip.
His thoughts still hover round his father's hall,
where first the sun-beams to his infant eye
unlock'd the gates of nature—where in sports
and games of mutual glee the happy brothers
drew daily closer soft affection's bonds.

I would not judge the gods—but sure the lot
of womankind is worthy to be pitied.

At home, at war, man lords it as he lists ;
in foreign provinces he is not helpless ;
possession gladdens him ; him conquest crowns ;
e'en death to him extends a wreath of honor.

Confin'd and narrow is the woman's bliss :
obedience to a rude imperious husband
her duty and her comfort ; and, if fate
on foreign shores have cast her, how unhappy !

So Thoas (yet I prize his noble soul)
detains me here in hated hallow'd bondage.

For, tho' with shame I feel it, I acknowledge
it is with secret loathness that I serve thee,

my

[7]

my great protectress, thee, to whom my life
 'twere fitting I in gratitude devoted;
 but I have ever hop'd, and still I hope,
 that thou, Diana, wilt not quite forsake
 the banisht daughter of the first of kings.

O born of Jove! if him, the mighty man
 whose soul thou woundedst with unhealing pangs
 when thou didst ask his child in sacrifice—
 if god-like Agamemnon, to thy altar
 who led his darling, from the fallen Troy
 thy hand hath to his country reconducted,
 and on the hero hath bestow'd the bliss
 to clasp his wife, Electra and his son—
 restore me also to my happy home;
 and save me, whom thou hast from death preserv'd,
 from worse than death, from banishment in Tauris.

IPHIGENIA & ARKAS.

ARKAS.

The king hath sent me hither, bid me hail
 with salutation meet Diana's priestess.
 This is the day, when Tauris thanks the goddess
 for new-cull'd wreaths of conquest. With the king
 The glad victorious army is approaching.

B 2

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

We are prepar'd to give them due reception.
The goddess will with gracious eye behold
great Thoas' sacrifice.

ARKAS.

Would that thine eye,
much honour'd priestess, with like mildness shone
to us auspicious. Still the cloud of sorrow
spreads its mysterious gloom around thee. Still
we vainly seek to lure from off thy lip
the voice of confidence for years withheld.
Long as I've known thee here, this bended brow
has ceas'd not to o'erawe me, and thy soul
seems lockt with bolts of iron in thy breast.

IPHIGENIA.

As best behooves a friendless banisht orphan*.

ARKAS.

And dost thou here seem friendless then and banisht?

* ἀπολις ἀφίλος,

Eur. Iphig. in Taur.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Can foreign lands become our country to us ?

ARKAS.

To thee thy country sure, ere now, is foreign.

IPHIGENIA.

And therefore will my bleeding heart not heal.
In early youth, when scarce my bosom knew
the charities of father, mother, brethren,
together from the ancient trunk we stretch'd
our pliant branches toward the smiling heaven,
when on my hapless bough the curse of fate
blasting alit, and ruthless tore me off
from those my soul held dear—with iron hand
it rent our tender union—yes ! they fell,
the sweetest gifts of youth, affection's blossoms.
Tho' sav'd, alas I am but as a shadow,
my soul will never learn to joy in life.

ARKAS.

Sure, if thy lot among us move complaint,
we have a right to call thy heart ungrateful,

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

I ever thank you,

ARKAS.

Not with those pure thanks,
for which a benefit is gladly done :
not with the brow serene, whereon the giver
reads the reflection of a gladden'd heart.
When thy mysterious fate so long ago
within this temple plac'd thee, Thous came,
receiv'd, rever'd thee, as the gift of gods.
This shore, to every other stranger griesly,
to thee was hospitable. Till thy coming
none stray'd within our frontier but he fell,
according to the usage of our fathers,
a bleeding victim at Diana's altar.

IPHIGENIA.

Merely to breathe in freedom is not life.
Is it to live—around this holy spot,
like ghosts around their graves, to wander wailing ?
Is it a life of conscious happiness,
when all our days are dream'd away in vain,

and

and only bring us nearer those dim days,
 which on the dull oblivious shore of Lethe
 the band of the departed moan away.
 A useless life is but an early death—
 and mine indeed has been this woman's lot.

ARKAS.

Altho' it robs thee of thy happiness,
 I pardon, yet lament this noble pride.
 But hast thou since thy coming been so useless?
 Who was it that dispell'd our monarch's gloom?
 Whose soft persuasion has from year to year
 put off the' accustom'd sacrifice of strangers,
 and stept between the prisoner and his doom
 to send him bondless home? Has not Diana
 heard thy mild prayers, so that she forgoes
 without a sign of wrath the ancient offering?
 And does not Victory wave her gladsome wing
 around our banners, and precede our march?
 Do not the people bless thee, that the king,
 whose wisdom and whose valor long have sway'd us,
 stoops at thy voice to mildness, and forgets
 in part the rigorous claim of mute submission?
 Livst thou a useless life? when from thy presence
 a dew of blessings o'er a nation spreads;
 when

when to this land, to which immortals brought thee,
thou art an ever-welling spring of good;
when this inhospitable fatal coast
grants, at thy wish, life and return to strangers.

IPHIGENIA.

The past is very trifling in his eye
who sees how much there yet remains to do.

ARKAS.

And is it right to undervalue good?

IPHIGENIA.

Who prizes his own deeds is justly blam'd.

ARKAS.

He too who undervalues real worth
no less than he who overrates demerit.
Hear me, and trust the counsel of a man,
who loves thee with sincere and honest zeal:
to-day, when Thoas shall address thee, priestess,
o listen to his prayer!

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou grievest me.

I oft have studied to avoid his offers.

ARKAS.

Calmly compare thy conduct with thy duty.
 Since worthy Thoas lost his only son,
 he trusts but few among us, and these few
 far less than heretofore. With jealous eye
 he views the son of every mighty noble,
 as one who may succeed him ; and he fears
 a solitary, helpless, friendless age,
 perchance rebellion, and untimely death.
 The Scythian sets no price on eloquence,
 and least of all the king ; he's only us'd
 to stern command and speedy execution ;
 nor knows the art to trail a winding speech
 along the mazes leading to persuasion.
 Make not his task more hard by cold reserve
 or purpos'd misconception. Aid his tongue ;
 with mild submission meet his wise intention.

C

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

What! shall I hurry on the ill I dread?

ARKAS.

And dost thou call his proffer'd hand a dread?

IPHIGENIA.

To me it is indeed a painful offer.

ARKAS.

With confidence at least repay his love.

IPHIGENIA.

My soul, alas! can not unlearn to fear.

ARKAS.

Why wilt thou not inform him of thy story?

IPHIGENIA.

Strict secrecy becomes a priestess well.

ARKAS.

No secret to a monarch should be such.

And

And, tho' he claim not thine, his lofty soul
feels, deeply feels thy studied cold concealment.

IPHIGENIA.

Does Thoas harbour then ill will against me ?

ARKAS.

It almost seems so. Tho' he talks not of thee,
yet casual words have led me to believe
that he is firmly bent on thy possession.
Then do not thwart him, least displeasure ripen
some dark resolve within his labouring breast,
and thou in sorrow recollect my counsel.

IPHIGENIA.

How! Does the king project what no brave man,
who loves his honour, and whose bosom feels
due reverence for the gods, should dare to think of?
Does he propose with violence from the altar
to bear me to his bed? Then will I call
on all the' immortal choir, and chiefly thee,
Diana, the resolv'd—thy virgin arm
will surely aid a virgin and thy priestess.

ARKAS.

Priestess be calm. No boiling blood of youth
inflames the king to perpetrate a deed
so rash and so unfitting. From his mind
I fear some other harsh resolve, which then,
for he is stern, and of unshaken firmness,
he irresistably fulfills. I pray thee
be grateful to him, and withhold no longer
thy confidence, if thou can grant no more.

IPHIGENIA.

Tell me what further of his thoughts thou knowst.

ARKAS.

Learn that from him. I see the king is coming.
Thou honourst him, and thy own heart will lead thee
to friendly confidence and meet behaviour.
Much can a woman's words on noble minds.

[goes.

IPHIGENIA.

How can I follow faithful Arkas' counsel?
Yet shall I willingly observe the duty,

to

to meet my benefactor with mild words.
 Could I but to the man of power address
 true words, without displeasing—I were glad.

IPHIGENIA & THOAS.

IPHIGENIA.

With kingly gifts the goddess strew thy path,
 with conquest, wealth and fame environ thee ;
 thy people's welfare be her constant boon,
 and may thy pious wishes ever prosper ;
 that thou, whose care to multitudes extends,
 mayst feel a bliss to multitudes deny'd.

THOAS.

I am contented if the people praise me.
 What I have won glads others more than me.
 He is the happiest, whether king or subject,
 beneath whose roof domestic joy resides.
 Thou wast a partner of my bitter grief
 when by my side the sword of hostile war
 stretch'd with the dead my last my best of sons.
 Long as my spirit brooded hot revenge
 I did not feel how void my dwelling was ;

but

but now, that I return with satiate soul,
 have offer'd up a nation to his manes,
 I meet no comfort in my silent home.
 Now from the eye, where glad obedience beam'd,
 lours discontent and plot. The childless man
 acquires not honour with his hoary hair.
 To-day this fane I enter, where I oft
 have ask'd and thank'd the heavens for victory,
 my bosom of no novel object full.
 Thou art not unacquainted with my wishes.
 To bless my people and to bless myself
 do thou return a bride to grace my palace.

IPHIGENIA.

Does it beseem thee thus on one unknown
 to lavish bounty?—Deep confusion veils
 the fugitive, who sought upon thy coast
 only the quiet safety thou hast given.

THOAS.

To hide the secret of thy birth so long
 from me, as from the lowest, is unfitting.
 This shore, which wholesome laws forbid to strangers,
 to thee was hospitable; thou injoyest

thy

thy days of life in unrestricted freedom.
From thee we did expect that confidence,
which to his host no pious guest denies.

IPHIGENIA.

If I have not disclos'd the name of those
to whom I owe my being, 'twas my fear,
not my mistrust, o king, that tempted me.
For didst thou know o'er whose accursed head
thy guardian arm extends, thy mighty heart
would shudder at the inauspicious deed.
Thou wouldst not have propos'd to share with me
thy throne, but rather wouldst have driven me hence,
ere the long period of my exile ends,
to pace about in company with woe,
thrust with a cold inhospitable hand
from clime to clime, a wandering helpless outcast.

THOAS.

Whate'er the gods for thee and thine have fixt—
since thou hast dwelt among us and enjoy'd
the pious rights of hospitality,
I have not wanted blessings from above:

nor

nor shall I soon believe that o'er thy head
fate lifts the arm of wrath.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy benefits,
but not thy guest have drawn the blessings on thee.

THOAS.

The good we do the wicked is unblest.
Cease then thy silence and thy opposition :
'tis not unjust to ask it. When the goddess
consign'd thee to my hands, thou wast to me
as sacred as to her. Be she once more
our umpire ! and if thou can see the means
for thy return, I give thee leave to quit me.
But if thy flight be hopeless, if thy race
in scatter'd exile rove, or heavier fate
have crusht them ruthless : then I claim thy hand.
My rights are more than one. Speak openly.
Thou knowst my word is sacred.

IPHIGENIA.

Willingly
my tongue breaks not its ancient bond to spread
the

the long-hid secret: once divulg'd it can
no more resume the safe retreat within;
but, as the gods determine, harms or saves.
Hear. I am of the race of Tantalus.

THOAS.

Calmly thou speakst a word of import high.
Is he thy ancestor, whom all the world
knows as a former favourite of the gods?
Is it that Tantalus, whom Jove himself
call'd to his council-table, whose discourse
experience link'd with wisdom, which the immortals
heard with delight.

IPHIGENIA.

From him I spring; but gods
should never treat a mortal like their equal:
weak man grows giddy if he's lifted high.
He had a noble soul and was no traitor.
He was too great to be the slave of Jove,
too mean for his companion; so he fell.
His fault was human, but his fate severe.

D

The

The poets tell us his vain-glorious pride*
and too incautious tongue from heaven hurl'd him
to groan below in ancient Tartarus—
and now the hate of gods pursues his offspring.

THOAS.

Do they his misdeeds or their own atone ?

IPHIGENIA.

His sons and grandsons heir'd the mighty breast
and curbless strength of Titan's progeny;
but fate with iron bandage from their eyes
hid wisdom, patience, prudence, moderation.
Their wishes rul'd with boundless violence.
Pelops, the only son of Tantalus,
acquir'd his wife by treachery and murder,
Hippodameia born of Œnomaus.
Two sons she bore him, Atreus and Thyestes.
With envious eye they mark'd the father's fondness

* Ὡς μεν λεγουσιν ὅτι θεοῖς ἀνδραπὸς ὡν
κοινῆς τραπέζης ἀξίωμ' ἔχων ἴσον
Ἀχολαστον ἔχε γλωσσᾶν αἰχρίσιν νοσον.

Eur. Orestes.

for

for his first-born, the son of lawless union.
 Together they contriv'd a fratricide.
 The angry Pelops thought Hippodameia
 the authoress of the murder, and with fury
 reclaims his slaughter'd child—the' affrighted matron
 in anguish slew herself—

THOAS.

Why art thou silent?
 repent not of thy confidence—speak on.

IPHIGENIA.

How happy he who *gladly* meditates
 the story of his lineage, *loves* to tell
 the deeds and greatness of his ancestry,
 delights his hearer with their list of *virtues*,
 and feels with silent joy *his* happy name
 worthy to close the beauteous file of heroes.
 Not often does one family produce
 the demigod, or monster: first, a row
 of good or mean unheeded passes, ere
 the pride or terror of a world appears.
 When Pelops died, his sons, with common sway,
 the city rul'd, until Thyestes' lust

D 2

defil'd

defil'd his brother's bed. His exile follow'd.
But long before, Thyestes, planning horrors,
had from his brother stolen a child, and taught it
to call its uncle father; and the youth
grew up in hate of Atreus; then he sends him
to plunge a steel in the paternal breast.

The king detects him, and with cruel torture
dislimbs his fancy'd nephew. Soon he learns
it was his son, and his recoiling soul
is all absorb'd in wishes of revenge.

With acted listlessness, he draws his brother
and both his nephews back into the city,
slays the two boys, and at the feast of welcome
presents their roasted members. When the father
with his own flesh had satiated his hunger,
a sudden gloom oppress'd him, he desires *
to see his children, hears them both announc'd,
and counts their coming steps with anxious ear.
The doors unfold, and Atreus, smiling, flings
their bloody heads against the shuddering father.
Thou turnst aside thy head—so turn'd the sun

* *Pectus gemit,*

Adeste nati genitor infelix vocat. Senec. Thyestes.

his

his palen'd visage from the damned deed,
and swerv'd his car from the eternal path *.
From such a race thy priestess is descended.
Much ill my forefathers have borne and done,
which thro' tradition's twilight dimly gleams,
or with broad wing forgetfulness hath shaded.

THOAS.

Remain it hid! Enough of guilt and horror,
Say by what miracle thy virtues sprang
from such a savage race.

IPHIGENIA:

The eldest son
of Atreus, Agamemnon, is my father;
and I with boldness may assert, I ever
beheld in him the model of a man.
To him the beauteous Clytemnestra bore
me, the first-fruits of love, and then Electra.

* Λεγεται

Στρεψαι δερμαν' αελις

Χρυσωπερ ιδρα.

Eur. Electra.

Peaceful

DATE
DAVID
CONSTRUCTIVE

Reader's Name
(in block capitals)

Peaceful my father rul'd in long exemption
 from the dire fate of Tantalus's race ;
 a son alone was wanting to his wishes.
 Scarce was Orestes born, when fate forwent
 to spin these golden days. Ye here have heard
 of the fierce war, avenging Helen's rape,
 which round the walls of Troy the Grecians wag'd.
 If they have reacht the aim of their revenge
 and won the town I have not learnt. My father
 was chosen leader of the Grecian forces.
 Arriv'd in Aulis, adverse gods deny'd
 the winds they wanted ; for Diana frown'd
 upon my father, and by Calchas' mouth
 claim'd the devotement of his eldest daughter.
 I, with my mother to the camp allur'd,
 from her embrace was torn, and at the altar
 presented in atonement to the goddess.
 She spar'd my life. The cloud that seal'd my sense
 her saving arm first scatter'd in this temple.
 And I am she, that Iphigenia,
 of Atreus' race, and Agamemnon's daughter,
 Diana's property, who now address thee.

THOAS,

THOAS.

I have no higher honors for the daughter
of Grecian kings, than for the maid unknown.
My first proposal I again repeat;
come, follow me, and share what I possess.

IPHIGENIA.

How may I venture on this impious step?
Has not the goddess, who protected me,
alone a right to my devoted head?
She sought me an asylum, she preserves me
perchance to soothe an aged father's cares,
whom my apparent loss enough has punisht.
Perchance my glad return is now approaching:
and shall I, mindless of the ways of heaven,
bind myself here without Diana's sanction?
Was I to stay I ask'd a signal of her—

THOAS.

That signal is that thou art still detain'd.
Seek not so many vain pretences, maid:
he, that refuses, needs not many words,
the other hears, among them, only *no*.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

They are not words intended to mislead.
 I've laid the bottom of my heart before thee.
 Dost thou not feel how I, with anxious bosom,
 pant to reclusp my father, mother, brethren;
 that in the halls, where Mourning's still small voice
 has lisp'd my absence, Joy, with fragrant hand,
 may hang the garland for my glad return.
 Ah ! wouldst thou send me thither in thy ships,
 to me and them thou gave a second life.

THOAS.

Return then—do whate'er thy wishes prompt—
 despise the voice of good advice and reason—
 be quite the woman, rul'd by each desire
 that draws the wavering soul to right or wrong.
 If haply lust within her bosom burn
 no sacred bond retains her from the traitor,
 who from the faithful long-protecting hand
 of father or of husband, would allure her ;
 and when the blaze of passion does not prompt,
 the golden tongue of eloquence in vain
 assails her deafen'd ear.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Remember, prince,
the noble promise which thy lips have made.—
And wilt thou thus repay my trust. Thou seemdst
prepar'd to let me pour out my whole soul.

THOAS.

I was not arm'd for so unhop'd an answer;
but 'twas to be expected, for I knew
it was a woman that I had to deal with.

IPHIGENIA.

Prince, be not angry with our hapless sex.
Our weapons are not dignified as yours,
yet are they not ignoble. Thou mayst trust me,
I am not blind unto thy happiness.
Thou thinkst, unknowing both thyself and me,
that closer union would in bliss connect us,
and boldly askest of me tame consent;
I thank the gods that they have giv'n me firmness
thus to decline what they have not approv'd.

E

THOAS.

[30]

THOAS.

'Tis not a god, but thy own heart denies me.

IPHIGENIA.

The gods address us only thro' our hearts.

THOAS.

And have not I an equal right to hear them.

IPHIGENIA.

The storm of passion drowns a gentler voice.

THOAS.

Can none beside the priestess lend attention?

IPHIGENIA.

The prince, above all others, should attend.

THOAS.

Thy holy office, thy ancestral claim
to sit at Jove's own board, may well, I ween,
have made thee more familiar with the gods
than earth-born savages.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

And must I then
thus—thus—atone the confidence extorted ?

THOAS.

I am but man, 'tis better we conclude.
I keep my word : meanwhile continue priestess
of our Diana, as herself appointed.
The goddess pardon me that I thus long
unjustly and with inward disapproval
allow thee to withhold the ancient offerings.
From immemorial ages not a stranger
lands on our fatal shore unsacrific'd.
Thy blandishments (wherein I sometimes read
the soft affection of a loving daughter,
sometimes with inward joy the secret wishes
that fitly vest a bride } have held me back,
with magic bondage from the walk of duty.
My senses, lull'd by thee to artful slumber,
heard not the angry murmurs of the people :
to this my weakness, loudly they ascribe
the early fall of my unhappy son.

E 2

For \

For thee I brave no more a nation's curse
but reinstate the ritual of my fathers.

IPHIGENIA.

On my account I never ask'd it of thee.
He knows the immortals not, whose soul believes *
that they delight in slaughter ; but attributes
his own dark cruel wishes to their natures.
Did not the goddess snatch me from the priest ?
She chose my service rather than my death.

THOAS.

'Tis not for us to judge and to reform
the sacred rites by our uncertain reason.
Perform thy duty, I accomplish mine.
Two strangers, whose arrival bodes no good,
are found among the caverns on our coast,
and now in bonds. With these resume the goddess
her ancient pious long-lost sacrifice !
I send them hither strait : thou knowst the service.
[goes.

Τες δ' ἐνθάδ' αὐτὲς ὄντας ἄνθρωποκτονες
Εἰς τὸν θεὸν τὸ φανὸν ἀναφέρειν δοκῶ·
Οὐδένα γὰρ ὀίμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν.

Eur. Iphig. in Taur.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Those whom fate unjustly dooms
 thou, Diana, my protectress,
 canst in veiling clouds inwrap,
 on the wings of mighty winds
 canst across the widest kingdoms
 or the widest ocean bear
 from the iron arm of fate.

To thy all-beholding glance
 distant ages still are present,
 long futurity is known.

O'er the children of thy care
 rolls thy mild and guardian look;
 as thy orb, the life of night,
 o'er the silent-thanking world.

O preserve my hands from blood!
 Peace and blessings go not with it.
 Even round the unwilling murderer
 roves the spirit of the slain
 to infest the lonesome hour
 and the watches of the dark—
 For the kind immortals never

to

[34]

to the scatter'd sons of men
grudge the fleeting day of life ;
but allow them willingly
their delighted looks to raise
to their own eternal skies,

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

*ORESTES & PYLADES bound.**ORESTES.*

IT is the path of death that we are treading :
 at every step my troubled soul grows calmer.
 When I besought Apollo to remove
 this griesly band of vengeful spirits from me,
 he seem'd in clear and hope-infusing words
 to promise me deliverance at Tauris,
 here in his sister's temple. Now I find
 that all my woes shall terminate with life.
 How readily does he, whom gods oppress,
 resign the aspect of the golden sun !
 And must the blood of Atreus not obtain
 a glorious end in fight—like Agamemnon,
 must I, a slaughter'd victim, fall defenceless—
 so be it ; rather at the altar here
 than by the knives of an avenging kindred.
 Spare me this gasp of life—infernal gods
 who dog-like track my footsteps to lap up
 with hellish thirst this parricidal blood,
 leave me—I soon shall be your own for ever.

The

The light was neither made for you nor me ;
 nor should the verdant carpet of the earth
 be stalkt upon by fiends. Below, below,
 I seek your dwellings, and an equal lot
 shall bind us there in everlasting darkness.
 'Tis thou, my Pylades, 'tis thou alone,
 the innocent copartner of my curse,
 whom to the comfortless abode I grieve
 to drag with me so soon. Thy life or death
 alone excites my hope or apprehension.

PYLADES.

I am not yet, Orestes, like thyself,
 dispos'd to wander to the realm of shades :
 nor am I hopeless from this tangled path,
 that seems to lead us to the endless vale,
 to find an upway back to light and life.
 I think not yet to perish ; but would fancy
 that destiny prepares a way for flight.
 Fear'd or unfear'd the stroke of death must come ;
 but it may yet be distant. Had the priestess
 already cut from our devoted heads
 the consecrated locks ; my only study
 should still be our escape. Despond not thus,

thy

thy doubts can but accelerate the danger.
 Apollo said, that, in his sister's temple,
 relief, return, were both provided thee :
 the promises of gods are ne'er ambiguous,
 as the opprest imagine in despair.

ORESTES.

Dark and ill-boding was the web of life
 my mother coil'd around my infant head ;
 for as I grew, my likeness to my father
 frown'd mute reproof on her, and her adulterer.
 How often, when *Electra* by the fire
 in our deep hall sat silent, I have thrown
 my troubled arm around her bending neck,
 and with broad eye explor'd her secret sorrow.
 Then would she tell me of my father's greatness—
 and I have wisht to see him, to be near him,
 to follow him to Troy—then would I pant
 for his return

PYLADES.

Let dæmons of the deep
 nightly discourse of that : the recollection
 of brighter hours shall fire our souls to daring.

F

The

The gods have need of many a virtuous man
to work their kind intentions here below,
and on thy aid they reckon; for they sent not
thee with thy father to unwelcome Orkus.

ORESTES.

O had I seiz'd his garment and gone with him !

PYLADES.

If so—the gods, who sav'd thee, thought of me.
What I had been, if thou hadst not surviv'd,
I cannot think; since with thee and for thee
alone I've liv'd and wisht to live till now.

ORESTES.

Remind me not of those pure days of bliss,
when my asylum was beneath thy roof:
when the nipt blossom of my helpless youth
thy noble father's kind and prudent care
protected, shelter'd, sav'd: when thou, my friend,
my first companion, like a butterfly
round a *dark* flower, wouldst play and sport about me,
transfuse thy chearfulness into my bosom,

make

make me forget the sorrows of my soul,
and bask with thee in youth's delightful sunshine.

PYLADES.

'Twas then my life began when first I lov'd thee.*

ORESTES.

Say rather it was then thy woes began.
O 'tis the hardest of the pangs I suffer
that, like a plague-infected vagabond,
I bear destruction secretly about me,
and, when I enter the most wholesome place,
the blooming cheek grows pale, the writhing feature
betrays the coming agony of death.

PYLADES.

If such contagion from thy presence flow'd
I had been first to feel it, my Orestes :
yet I am full of spirits still and courage,
and these are Execution's wings on which
she reaches mighty actions.

* τι δὲ ζῆλος ἐταπίας ἀνερ,

Eur. Orestes.

ORESTES.

ORESTES.

Mighty actions!

I recollect the time we thought about them.
 When we had chac'd the game o'er hill and dale
 hoping hereafter, like our ancestors,
 so to pursue, with undegenerate strength,
 the monster or the robber, and at twilight
 together sat upon the beachy shore
 leaning against each other, where the waves
 would sport and flicker to our very feet—
 and the wide world so open lay before us—
 oft we have seiz'd our swords with glowing hand,
 while future deeds of glory burst upon us,
 like countless stars from the surrounding gloom.

PYLADES.

The task is infinite, Orestes, which
 the soul aspires to' accomplish. We would do
 each deed as greatly as the poet shapes it,
 roll'd by the swelling tempest of his song
 adown the stream of time from land to land.
 What our forefathers did appears so splendid,
 when in the silent shades of evening stretcht

we

we hear it warbled to the stricken harp,
 and what we do is, as it was to them,
 a painful piece-meal work. Thus we run on
 pursuing what's before—of what's beside
 unmindful—nor observe the obvious traces
 of our forefathers' earthly drudgery;
 but chace their shadows, which like gods adorn
 a mountain-summit on a golden cloud.
 Him I esteem not, who can prize himself
 high as the multitude may chance to lift him.
 But thou, young man, be thankful to the gods
 that they have done so much thro' thee already.

ORESTES.

Let him be thankful thro' whose favour'd hand
 misfortune from his family is warded,
 his kingdom is enlarg'd or made secure,
 his ancient foes defeated or destroy'd;
 for he obtains the sweetest bliss of life.
 But me they have made choice of for a butcher,
 have made the murderer of an honour'd mother,
 and lay'd me low in unremoving woe,
 the guilty'avenger of a deed of guilt.

O hardly-

O hardly-fated house of Tantalus *!
Not thy last remnant would the gods destroy
unsoil'd by crime and infamy.

PYLADES.

The gods
avenge not on the son the father's crimes.
The good, the wicked, earns his own deserts
by his own deeds. The blessings of a parent,
but not his curses are hereditary.

ORESTES.

Methinks it is no blessing brings us hither.

PYLADES.

It is at least the order of the gods.

ORESTES.

Their order then destroys.

* 'Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδείς ἄλλος ἀδελωτερός
Τῶν Τανταλίων.

Eur. Elæstra,

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

Obey in patience.

When thou hast borne his sister to Apollo,
and both receive fit reverence at Delphos,
they shall be gracious to thee for the deed,
and banish thy infernal followers.
Beneath these hallow'd shades their feet impure
presume not.

ORESTES.

Then my death will be the calmer.

PYLADES.

My hopes rise higher: thoughtfully combining
the past and future, one may penetrate,
methinks, the plans that fate is ripening.
Diana wishes from this savage coast,
and from its human offerings to escape:
we are selected for the'auspicious theft,
and destiny has led us to the threshold.

ORESTES.



ORESTES.

Dost thou not cunningly mistake thy wishes
for the predestination of the god?

PYLADES.

What is all human prudence, if neglectful
to seek the will of heaven? The gods call forth
a man of many sins, but noble soul,
to difficult and dangerous undertaking—
lo, he succeeds! The pardon'd penitent
heaven and mankind conspire to bless and honour.

ORESTES.

If my doom were a life of active service,
some god would from my darken'd front roll back
this cloud of gloom, thro' which I only scan
the path all clotted with a mother's blood,
down which I slide to Orkus—he would dry
the fountain that from Clytemnestra's wounds
defiles me with its ever-springing gore.

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

Wait patiently. Thou dost augment thy evils,
and take the furies' office to thyself.
Let me contrive our conduct; at the last,
when there is need of our united daring,
I'll claim thy succour to achieve the project.

ORESTES.

I hear Ulysses speak *.

PYLADES.

No mockery now.

Yet every one must fix upon some hero
on whom to model his pursuit of glory;
and I acknowledge to thee, in my eyes
prudence and art do seldom misbecome
the man, who aims at shining enterprize.

ORESTES.

I like him best, who's bold sincere and open.

* Ὁ δὲ παῖς Στρωφίῃ—

Ὅτις Ὀδυσσεὺς σιγᾷ δαίσιος

Πρὸς δὲ φίλοις—

Eur. Orestes.

G

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

And therefore have I not requir'd thy counsel.
 One step is already taken. From our guards
 I learn there dwells a godlike woman here,
 who checks the execution of the law
 that threatens us, only offering to the gods
 incense and prayer and a pure spotless heart.
 All love her, and they think that she descends
 from Amazons, and hither fled for refuge
 against some great impending woe.

ORESTES.

It seems

her gentle sway lost all its lenient power
 when guilt and I approach'd, whom Jove's displeasure
 with midnight horror every where surrounds.
 Relentment ceas'd from pity when I came,
 and Custom whets again the rusted knife.
 The king is angry, and has doom'd our end;
 how should a woman save us from his rage?

PYLADES.

I'am glad it is a woman we look up to.
 The best of men learns cruelty at length

and

and grows accustom'd to the deed he hated;
 women retain whatever bent of mind
 they first contract. As well in good as evil
 one may more surely reckon on their sameness.
 Harken—she comes. She must not know at once
 and unreserv'd our names and our adventures.
 Retire awhile, and let me speak with thee,
 before she sees thee.

[*Orestes goes.*]

IPHIGENIA & PYLADES.

IPHIGENIA *unbinding him.*

Tell me whence thou art?

I think thou wearst the semblance of a Greek
 not of a Scythian. Freedom is not safety—
 The gods award impending danger from thee!

PYLADES.

Blest sound! thrice welcome in a foreign land
 thou well-known accent of my native tongue.
 Thy voice calls up before the captive's view
 the azure mountains of his mother-country.

G 2

O let

O let my joy convince thee I'am a Greek,
and plead for my forgiveness, if awhile
I have forgotten what is due to thee,
and bent my fancy toward the fond idea.
O say, if no superior power forbid,
from which of our heroic families
thy noble birth derives its origin.

IPHIGENIA.

The priestess, by Diana's self appointed,
discourses with thee, and let that suffice.
But tell me who art thou ? what evil star
hath guided hither thee and thy companion ?

PYLADES.

That thou couldst dart the ray of hope upon us
as easily as I relate our woes !
We are from Crete, the sons of brave Adrastus,
He is the first-born, nam'd Laodamas ;
I, Cephalus, the youngest : but between us
a rude wild youth grew up, whose very sports
had often torn our bonds of love asunder.
While yet our father at the siege of Troy
was busied, we obey'd a mother's prudence ;

but

but when enrich'd with plunder he return'd
and died ere long ; a contest for his wealth
and for the vacant sceptre parted us.
I join'd the elder : he has slain his brother.
For fratricide the furies haunt his path.
The Delphian Phœbus promis'd us in Tauris
a termination to the luring curse.
Our capture and our threaten'd sacrifice
thou knowst.

IPHIGENIA.

And is the fall of Troy accomplisht?
Dearest of men, repeat, repeat that word.

PYLADES.

It is. Be thou our guardian and protectress.
Accelerate the promis'd help of heaven,
take pity on my brother and console him ;
but spare him, I beseech thee, in thy speech.
His feeling soul, by painful recollection,
is torn too easily ; and feverish madness
will often seize him in her vulture-claw
and give him up to the unpitying furies.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Great as his sufferings are, I must conjure thee
forget them for a while and satisfy me.

PYLADES.

The haughty city, which for ten whole years
withstood the might of Greece, is now a ruin;
but many a Grecian tomb will long arrest
our fond remembrance on the Trojan shore.
There fell Achilles and his beauteous friend,

IPHIGENIA.

So crumble e'en the images of gods?

PYLADES.

Nor Palamede nor Telamonian Ajax
review'd the sunshine on their native hills.

IPHIGENIA aside.

He does not name my father with the slain.
He lives, he lives! and I again may see him—

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

Yet happy are the thousands that have sunk*
 by hostile hands in honourable combat:
 for horrid slaughters and a mournful end
 some angry god prepar'd to the returning
 instead of triumphs. Does the voice of man
 not reach this land, that thou hast yet to learn
 the complicate misfortunes that befell,
 and art a stranger to the woe that fills
 Mycene's hall with ceaseless lamentation.
 Assisted by Ægisthus, Clytemnestra
 slew, on the day of his return, her husband.
 I see thou honourest this royal house.—
 Thy bosom vainly labours to throw off
 the unexpected weight of my sad words.—
 Art thou the daughter of some friend or kinsman,
 or born perchance within that unblest city?—
 Hide it not from me ; and detest me not
 for bringing hither first the hated tidings.

* Quisquis ad Trojam jacet
 Felix vocatur cadere qui meruit manu.

Seneca. Agamemnon.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Say further how the horrid deed was done.

PYLADES.

The day the king arriv'd, as from the bath
 refresht he was ascending, and awaited
 a change of raiment from his consort's hand,
 she flung, with cunning arm, a tangled robe
 across his shoulders and majestic head.
 While from its many and confusing folds,
 as from a net, he strove to disentangle *
 his prison'd limbs, the vile Ægisthus smote him,
 and veil'd, the prince descended to the shades.

IPHIGENIA.

What was the cursed traitor's recompence?

PYLADES.

A bed and kingdom he posses'd already.

* Απειρον ἀμφιβληστρον, ὡς περ ἰχθυων.

Æschylus. Agamemnon.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

'Twas lust then prompted to the guilty deed ?

PYLADES.

Lust and long-harbour'd wishes of revenge.

IPHIGENIA.

How had the king offended Clytemnestra ?

PYLADES.

With harshness, which if aught might plead for murder
would lessen the atrociousness of this.

He had allur'd the queen to come to Aulis,
there seiz'd her darling first-born Iphigenia,
and stain'd the altar with a daughter's blood ;
because the gods denied a prosperous wind.

Hence sprang the hate, that to Ægisthus' tongue
unlock'd her easy bosom, and induc'd her
to weave this woof of mischief for her husband.

IPHIGENIA veiling herself.

Captive enough. Thou'lt see me yet again.

[goes.

H

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

She seems affected deeply by the fate
of Agamemnon. Whosoe'er she be,
she must have known him well, and have belong'd
to some high family before her capture
and sale to these barbarians. Now, my heart,
a twinkling star of hope is risen anew,
and we may steer our course with growing spirit.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

IPHIGENIA & ORESTES.

IPHIGENIA unbinding him.

UNHAPPY man, I only loose thy bonds
 in sign of harder fate : the freedom granted
 here in the holy grove to both of you
 is, like the last bright gleam of animation
 upon the sick man's face, death's harbinger.
 I dare not yet acknowlege to myself
 that you are lost ; for how could I uplift
 a murderous hand 'gainst your devoted lives ?
 and no one dares presume, while I am priestess,
 to touch your consecrated heads. But, ah !
 should I refuse obedience to the king,
 in anger he will choose among my train
 some other virgin to discharge the office,
 and I shall have but wishes to bestow.—
 Much-valued countryman ! The very slave
 who but approach'd our patrial houshold gods
 is richly welcome in a foreign land—

H 2

how

how can I pour enough of joy and blessing
on you, who bear the image of the heroes*
whom from my infancy I've learn'd to honour,
and in my inmost heart light up anew
the faded flattering pictures of my youth.

ORESTES.

Dost thou from prudent choice conceal thy name
and thy descent, or may I hope to know
whose heavenly goodness warbles comfort to me?

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, thou shalt know me; but inform me first
(for from thy brother I have learnt but half)
of those, who coming back from fallen Troy
found on the threshold of a long-wisht home
an unexpected hard and cruel doom.
Tho' I was early banisht to this shore,
I recollect the shy and hasty glance,

* Τοις τοις ἐν τῶν ἑμῶν ὁμοσπορων
ὡς περ λελειπται.

Eur. Iphig. in Taur.

I cast

I cast with wonder on the train of heroes.
 'Twas as Olympus from its top had pour'd
 the awful shadows of the illustrious dead
 to stalk in terror to the walls of Troy ;
 and Agamemnon was of all the greatest.
 Tell me—he fell, the day he saw his home,
 by Clytemnestra and Ægisthus slain ?

ORESTES.

He did.

IPHIGENIA.

Ah sad Mycene ! On thy site
 the sons of Tantalus, with lavish hand,
 are strowing curse on curse : like baneful weeds
 they teem with ever-multiplying crimes,
 and to their children's children still transmit
 murder on murder for inheritance.
 Disclose the rest thy brother left untold,
 when horror's gloom suspended my attention.
 How was the remnant of this mighty race,
 hereafter the avenger of his father,
 the last-born child, the only son, Orestes,
 preserv'd from slaughter on that day of blood ?

The

The net of black Avernus round his head
has a like fortune drawn or spar'd in mercy?
Say, was he sav'd? Lives he? and lives Electra?

ORESTES.

They live.

IPHIGENIA.

They live? Lend me, thou golden sun,
thy fairest beams to lay in gratitude
before Jove's throne! for I am poor and mute—

ORESTES.

If the heir'd ties of hospítality
or nearer bonds connect thee with this house,
as by thy joy would seem, o curb thy heart;
for to re-plunge into a sea of sorrow*
is to the happy doubly horrible.
Thou only knowst of Agamemnon's death
I find—

* —μετ' ἐντυχίας κακῶσας
Θνατοῖς βαρὺς αἰών.

Eur. Iphig. in Taur.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

And is not this enough to know?

ORESTES.

Thou yet hast heard but half the horrid tale.

IPHIGENIA.

What more?—Orestes and Electra live?—

ORESTES.

Hast thou no fears for Clytemnestra's fate?

IPHIGENIA.

My fears or hopes are impotent to save her.

ORESTES.

She is departed from the land of hope.

IPHIGENIA.

Did her repenting hand in expiation
shed her own blood?

ORESTES.

ORESTES.

Not so: yet her own blood
consign'd her to the shades.

IPHIGENIA.

Give clearer answer.
Uncertainty with many-folded wing
hides in ill-boding gloom my anxious head.

ORESTES.

And have the gods reserv'd me to relate
a deed which gladly in the silent realms
of night and hell I would for ever hide—
thy gentle tongue against my will compels it.
Expect and have a tale to shudder at.
The day that royal Agamemnon fell,
Electra's prudent hand conceal'd her brother
beneath the roof of Strophius, a kinsman.
He willingly receiv'd and educated
with his own Pylades, the fugitive,
and both the youths grew up in tenderest friendship.
Their bosoms early felt a burning wish
to'avenge

to'avenge the monarch's death: in strange attire
 they sought Mycene, and announc'd themselves
 as messengers of young Orestes' death,
 and bearers of his ashes. Thus they gain'd
 a glad admittance from the credulous queen.
 Orestes to Electra then disclos'd
 his name and purpose. She, with ardent lip
 rekindled soon the embers of revenge
 that in the sacred presence of a mother
 had faded in his breast; in silence led him
 to where his father fell, and pointed out
 a wither'd blood-mark on the guilty floor *
 that linger'd still for vengeance; there describ'd
 with tongue of fire each murky circumstance
 that dy'd the crime still deeper, wail'd her own
 hard slavish treatment and the haughty carriage
 of the successful traitors, show'd the dangers
 that loured over Agamemnon's children
 from their unfeeling step-mother (for such†

* *ἄιμα δ' ἐστὶ πατρὸς κατὰ στεγὰς*
Μελαρ σέσηπεν. Eur. Electra.

† *Adest natis tuis*
Furens noverca. Senec. Agamem.

I

to

to them she was become) and to Orestes
 consign'd the old and oft-incrimson'd poignard
 so went to murders in the house of Pelops—
 And Clytemnestra by her son was slaughter'd.

IPHIGENIA.

Immortals, who on ever-golden clouds
 spend your clear days in joy—was it for this
 ye tore me from my country, from the world—
 for this that ye approach'd me to your shrines—
 for this intrusted to my patient hand
 to feed the holy flame, taught my calm'd soul
 like it to lift a clear and equal look
 of pious hope to your unruffled dwellings—
 that I might later learn and deeper feel
 the dire misfortunes of a race ye frown on?
 Talk to me of the wretched—of Orestes

ORESTES.

Would I could tell thee also of his death!
 How from his mother's gaping wounds arose
 her haughty spirit, and with angry yell
 shriek'd to the ancient daughters of the night*

* *γυκτος' αἰων τεκνα.*

Æsch. Eumenides.

“ Seize

“ Seize on this parricide, this son of guilt,
 “ and with implacable revenge pursue him.”
 They heard her voice ; they roll’d their hollow eyes,
 like famisht eagles, on their destin’d prey ;
 in their dark dens they stirr’d ; their sad companions
 Doubt and Remorse from silent corners stole
 with knitted hands to earth from their loose locks
 dispersing pitchy damps of Acheron.—
 Now ceaseless contemplation of the past
 rolls in black gyres around his haunted brow.—
 The fiends long-banisht from the beauteous earth
 renew their all-deforming range with him,
 pursue his rovings, hang upon his step,
 and only stop to add redoubled horror
 to the black hour they overtake his flight.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy man ! Thy much resembling fate
 makes thee more deeply sympathize with his.

ORESTES.

How cam’st thou to suspect my fate like his ?

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy younger brother has intrusted to me
that thou hast also slain thy nearest kinsman.

ORESTES.

I cannot bear that thy pure spotless soul
should be misled by falshood. Let the stranger
weave his deceitful and insnaring wiles
for them he fears ; but, between us, be truth.
I am Orestes : and this guilty head
is stooping to the tomb, is seeking death—
in any form his coming shall be welcome.
Whoe'er thou be, to thee and to my friend
I wish deliverance, to myself destruction.
Thou seemst to be detain'd against thy will ;
contrive to fly with him, and leave me here,
that headlong hurl'd from these impending rocks
my gushing blood may to the sea extend,
and roll wide curses o'er this savage shore.
Go ye together back to lovely Greece,
there may new life and happier days await you.

[Retires into the wood.]

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Fulfilment, daughter of the almighty sire,
 at length the hour of thy descent is come,
 and thy vast image stands unroll'd before me!
 My aching sight scarce reaches to thy hands,
 which, with the treasures of Olympus fill'd,
 shower wreaths of benediction!—As a king
 is known by the profusion of his bounty,
 (for that to him is nothing, which to crouds
 is riches) also ye are known, Celestials,
 by long-reserv'd and wisely-granted gifts :
 for ye alone distinguish what behooves us,
 and oversee futurity's wide realms,
 while mists conceal from us the wonderous prospect
 and dim the twinkling star-beams to our gaze.
 Calmly ye hear our restless childish prayers
 to hasten your decrees ; but your wise hands
 cull not the heavenly fruit, while unmatu'r'd :
 and wo is him, who with impatient lip
 would seize the good in store!—he swallows death.
 Let not this long-awaited joy forsake me,
 and, like the visions of departed friends,
 abandon to reality of woe.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA & ORESTES.

ORESTES *returning.*

If thou be praying to the gods above
 speak not my name with thine and Pylades',
 my name draws vengeance down on its associates,
 and prayers are impotent to soothe this torment.

IPHIGENIA.

My fate is knit with thine.

ORESTES.

Not so : alone
 and unattended would I sink to Hades.
 Were thy own veil inwrapt around my head
 it could not hide me from the dragon-eyed
 the ever-watchful followers of my step.
 Nay, e'en thy very presence, heavenly woman,
 may turn their looks askance, but can't avert them.
 What tho' their impious brazen tread may not *

Χαλκίππου Επιστρυς.

Sopho. Elec.

o'erstep

o'erstep the limits of the holy grove,
 I hear them yonder grinning horrid laughter,
 like wolves around the tree upon whose top
 the traveller climb'd for safety. There they lie,
 and at my coming from the earth shall start,
 lift the big cloud of dust with busy feet,
 give to the hissing winds their snaky locks,
 and dog my flight with never-ending chace.

IPHIGENIA.

Orestes, listen to a friendly word.

ORESTES.

No: keep it for a friend of the celestials.

IPHIGENIA.

They give thee earnest of reviving hopes.

ORESTES.

I see the pale gleam of the flood of death—
 'twill guide me thro' this mist of woe to hell.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Hast thou no other sister than Electra?

ORESTES.

I knew but one ; yet the all-ruling hand
of fate remov'd an elder, who beheld not
the miserable doom of all her kindred.
Cease, cease thy questions, do not join the band
of my tormentresses, who blow away
with wicked joy the ashes of oblivion,
least the warm embers of remorse should fade
and cease to scorch my soul. Will they for ever
cast scalding sulphur on the glowing brand
which Crime has given to the sons of Pelops
for a perpetual heirdom—ever sear
my soul with coals of hell.

IPHIGENIA.

Be't mine to fling
some fragrant incense on the flame. Allow
affection's gentle breath to cool thy bosom.

Orestes,

Orestes, my belov'd, wilt thou not hear me?
 Has the terrific band of thy pursuers
 drain'd all the blood of nature from thy veins,
 and have their Gorgon-eyeballs petrified
 thy feeling heart?—O, if a mother's curse
 call thee with hollow accent to the shades,
 may not the purer blessing of a sister
 draw from Olympus ease and comfort to thee?

ORESTES.

She calls—and thou combin'st to rend my bosom.
 Have gods of vengeance borrow'd e'en thy form?
 Who art thou, that with searching tongue disturbest
 the very bottom of my billowing soul?

IPHIGENIA.

Does not thy heart inform thee? I am she—
 am Iphigenia—am here—alive.

ORESTES.

Who, thou?

IPHIGENIA.

My brother!

K

ORESTES.

ORESTES.

Hence! nor touch these locks;
as from Creusa's wedding-garment, thence
contagious flows a fire unquenchable.
Away—like Hercules, I would exhale
my worthless hated life in wilds and deserts.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou shalt not perish.—O that I could hear
one calm reply to banish every doubt
and make me sure I have the bliss I've pray'd for.
A wheel of joy and sorrow hurries round
my agitated soul. Upon the stranger
I look with apprehension; but my heart
resistless throws me on a darling brother.

ORESTES.

Is this Lyæus' temple, that the priestess
thus with unbridled holy fury glows?

IPHIGENIA.

O hear me, look upon me, how my heart
expands to compass all the happiness

of

of seeing thee (the dearest whom the world
has left me still) of folding in these arms,
that long have open'd on the vacant wind,
thee, my Orestes. Let me, let me clasp thee.
As down Parnassus flows the' eternal fountain
from rock to rock along the golden vale
clear and abundant, so a flood of joy
streams from my heart in copious waves, and spreads
an ample sea of happiness around me.
Orestes, o my brother !

ORESTES.

Lovely nymph,
I neither trust thee nor thy soothing speeches.
Diana asks severer votaries,
nor will she see her sanctuary profan'd.
A truce to thy embraces ! Wouldst thou give
thy fond affections to a worthy youth,
with love and safety crown my friend. He roves
among yon rocks : seek him ; abandon me.

IPHIGENIA.

Brother, command thyself, and know me better ;
nor take a sister's transports (heaven approves them)

K 2

for

for hasty punishable headlong lust.
 Ye gods, remove illusion from his eye,
 least this bright instant of the utmost joy
 should make us trebly wretched. I am she,
 thy long-lost sister. Trembling from the altar
 Diana bore me to her temple here.
 Thou art the destin'd victim now, and findest
 a sister in the priestess.

ORESTES.

Curse on curse !

now may the sun behold the dire completion
 of the black woes, that gather on our house.
 Is not Electra here to perish with us,
 and save her head from lengthening coils of horror ?
 Come, priestess, to the altar—Fratricide
 with us is an hereditary custom—
 First let me thank the gods that they decree
 to root me childless from the face of earth*.
 And, let me counsel thee, forget to view
 the sun and stars with pleasure, and prepare

* ἡλοιμένη προσθεν ἐκ θεῶν ἀπαις,

Æsch. Choeph.

with

with me for mansions in the house of darkness,
 Our race—like dragons in the sulphur-pool,
 born of one mother—tear each others entrails—
 Childless and guiltless come along with me.
 Thou lookst with pity on me—look not so—
 such were the eyes thy mother turn'd upon me
 to seek an entrance to my filial heart,
 when I had heav'd my hand to pierce her bosom :
 and yet the dagger pierc'd her.—Mother, come,
 and place a troop of furies round thy children :
 they'll have a welcome sight to smile upon,
 the last, most horrible, that shall befall us.
 Nor hate, nor grim revenge have whet the poignard ;
 but a fond sister shall be forced to use it.—
 Weep not, thou hast no crimes upon thy soul.
 From infancy I have not known such love
 as I could feel for thee. But, spare me not,
 lift, lift the glittering steel, in kindness make
 an outlet for the boiling streams within.

[Falls exhausted upon the ground.]

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Alone I cannot bear this bliss and woe*.

Where art thou Pylades to lend me help ?

[Retires in search of him,

ORESTES 'rising from his swoon.

Another—Grant me yet from Lethe's wave
one more reviving cup of cool refreshment—
soon shall these dregs of life be rinc'd away
by calm Oblivion's flood. To you, ye shades,
to your eternal mists, eternal stillness
a persecuted wretch would fly for refuge.
I hear the whispering of your twilight groves :
round their new guest your cloudy forms assemble,
What lofty band in sweet communion met,
like a collected family of princes,
come gliding hither, every sex and age,
yet all of godlike port in peaceful union.
'Tis they, 'tis they! my ancestors—With Atreus
Thyestes walks in confidential converse,

* Μὴν γὰρ ἀγὼν ἐκείνι σῶσω
Λυπῆς—ἄχθος.

Sopho. Elec.

the

the children smiling hang upon their steps.
 And does not enmity pervade your dwellings—
 does vengeance wither with the light of day—
 then I am welcome, and may hope to join
 your solemn train, may bid you, hail ! my fathers,
 Orestes—of your race the last—arrives.
 He reap'd the harvest that ye sow'd of curses.
 But here all burdens are more light to bear.
 Admit him of your circle. Thee, Thyestes,
 thee, Atreus, I respect : here hate expires.
 Show me my father, whom I saw on earth
 but once—Does he accompany my mother
 and link his arm in her's who plann'd his death ?
 and may not I approach her—say, behold
 thy son, behold your son—and they will greet me.
 On earth a salutation foreran murder
 among the sons of ancient Tantalus ;
 after the night of death their joys begin.
 Ye welcome me, receive me in your band,
 now guide me to the venerable form
 of him, who sat in council with the gods.
 Ye seem to shudder and avert your looks.
 What ! have the mighty fasten'd cruel Torment
 with

with brazen fetters to the hero's breast ?

[Iphigenia and Pylades enter.]

And are ye come already ? Welcome, sister.

Some god of mercy send our only remnant,

Electra, hither with a gentle arrow !

I pity thee, my friend—my hapless friend.

Come, come with me to Pluto's throne—'tis fitting
that the new guests salute their gloomy host.

IPHIGENIA, ORESTES & PYLADES.

IPHIGENIA.

Twin-born of Jove, who thro' the skiey vast
conduct the lovely lights of day and night,
the solace of mankind, forbid to shine
on the departed, by your mutual fondness

look on a brother's and a sister's woe.

Thou lov'st thy gentle brother, o Diana,
more than all things above, on earth, below,
and ever turnst in silent contemplation
thy virgin-face to his eternal light.

Let not my only, late-found, dear Orestes
in the dark wilderness of madness rove ;

but,

but, if thy will, when thou didst hide me here,
be now fulfill'd ; if thou, thro' him to me,
thro' me to him, intendest bounteous aid ;
o loose him from the fetters of the curse,
least we forgo the precious hour of flight.

PYLADES.

Wilt thou not know us, and this holy grove,
and this fair light that beams not on the dead ?
Feel the embraces of a friend and sister,
who hold thee fast and living. Grasp our hands—
we are not empty shades—arise, attend,
each moment is important—our return
hangs on a slender thread, which, it should seem,
auspicious fates with willing finger spin.

ORESTES to Iphigenia.

For the first time let me with open heart
taste in thy arms the purity of joy.
Ye gods, who spread on high with flaming hand
the heavy storm-cloud, kindly terrible
who pour the rain upon the thirsty earth
amid the rush of winds and roar of thunder,
changing the silent awe and humble fear

L

of

of man to thankful tears and songs of praise,
 while the new sun from ev'ry brighten'd leaf
 reflects his presence, and with painted hand,
 Iris divides the dusky-skirted clouds—
 o let me also in my sister's clasp,
 and on the bosom of my friend, injoy
 the bliss, ye give, in fullest gratitude.
 My heart feels conscious that your curses finish.
 I hear the fleet Eumenides retire
 and cloze behind them the far-thundering doors
 of Tartarus. The earth steams welcome fragrance,
 inviting me upon its smiling brim
 to chace the joys of life and meeds of virtue.

PYLADES.

Let not the hour that's given escape unus'd.
 The wind that swells our sail must be the bearer
 of our full satisfaction to Olympus.
 Come, we have need of hasty resolution.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

IPHIGENIA.

FOR the feeble son of man
 when the heavenly band prepare
 hardship, danger and distress ;
 and have doom'd his shaken soul
 frequent change from joy to woe,
 or from woe to double joy :—
 in the city's neighbourhood,
 or on the remoter shore,
 that, in gloomy hours of need,
 steady help be never far,
 they with foresight kind provide him
 a calm a faithful friend.

On Pylades and on his undertakings
 shower down your blessings, ever-living gods.
 His is the nervous arm of youth in strife ;
 and his the luminous eye of age in counsel.
 His soul is fraught with an exhaustless store
 of holy calmness, which, with patient hand
 he portions out to the poor wandering outcast ;
 diffusing balmy peace and wise resolve.

L 2

He

He tore me from my brother, whom my eyes
 drank with fond gaze and ceaseless thirst, unheeding
 how very near the rising cloud of danger
 now sails. They're hastening to the nook, wherein
 the ship and their companions wait a signal,
 and they have furnisht me an artful answer
 in case the king shall urge the sacrifice.
 I see I must be guided like a child.
 I have not learnt disguise, nor know by cunning
 to gain my purpose.—Falsehood, how I loathe thee !
 A lie leaves not the soul at liberty,
 nor comforts like a truly-spoken word ;
 but it torments the breast that forges it,
 returning, like the dart which gods divert,
 to wound the archer. Care on care assails
 my anxious mind. Perhaps the fury seizes
 my brother yonder on the 'unhallow'd ground.—
 Perhaps they're caught, imprison'd—Sure I hear
 the tread of armed men—A messenger
 is hastening hither with the king's commands.
 O how I fear to look upon the man
 whom, with a false reply I must deceive.

IPHIGENIA,

IPHIGENIA & ARKAS.

ARKAS.

Priestess, thou mayst not thus delay the offering :
the king and people wait with loud impatience.

IPHIGENIA.

I should obey my duty and thy orders,
if unexpected hindrance had not stept
between my purpose and its execution.

ARKAS.

What thwarts the solemn order of the king ?

IPHIGENIA.

Chance, which delights to laugh at human foresight.

ARKAS.

Say on—that I may bear the reason to him ;
for he determin'd on the death of both.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

As yet the gods have not determin'd on it—
 Upon the elder of these men reposes
 the guilt of shedding kindred blood. The Furies
 pursue his footsteps ; and the haunted wretch,
 seiz'd in the inmost temple by a phrenzy
 profan'd the holy shrine with present madness.
 I hasten with my virgin-train to bear
 the statue of the goddess to the shore,
 there by lustration and mysterious rites
 the ominous pollution to atone.
 Let none presume to follow our procession.

ARKAS.

The king shall know this new impediment.
 'Till he permit, begin not thou the rite.

IPHIGENIA.

That is a care belonging to the priestess.

ARKAS.

'Tis fitting that the king should hear what passes.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

His counsel or command may alter nothing.

ARKAS.

Oft we consult the mighty out of form.

IPHIGENIA.

Do not insist on what I must refuse.

ARKAS.

Do not refuse a useful just request.

IPHIGENIA.

I yield—if thou return without delay.

ARKAS.

With speed I'll bear thy message to the camp
and soon be here.—There is a message, priestess,
which if I bore—'twould banish all confusion—
but thou hast scorn'd my honest prudent counsel.

IPHIGENIA.

All that I could I readily have done.

ARKAS.

ARKAS.

It is not yet too late to change thy mind.

IPHIGENIA.

That is beyond our power.

ARKAS.

It may be painful.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou thinkst I might, because thy wish misleads thee.

ARKAS.

Wilt thou risk all so calmly?

IPHIGENIA.

I abandon
my fate to the decision of the gods.

ARKAS.

They're wont to save mankind by human means.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

What they point out it is for man to do.

ARKAS.

I tell thee every thing is in thy hand.
 It is alone the anger of the king
 that dooms these men to bitter death. The army
 are now disus'd to this inhuman custom :
 for many, whom their adverse fates have thrown
 upon some savage coast, have there experienc'd
 how godlike to the homeless wanderer
 the friendly countenance of a man appears.
 Do not forsake a work thou canst accomplish ;
 'tis easy to complete what's once begun :
 for Mercy (when from heaven in human form
 she stoops) does no where sooner spread her sway
 than where a wild new people, full of life
 courage and warmth, whose uncorrupted feeling
 left to itself and vague uneasy bodings
 flows undirected, bear the load of life.

M *IPHIGENIA.*

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IPHIGENIA.

O spare my agitated soul : thou canst not
direct its billows to thy will.

ARKAS.

As yet
ere 'tis too late, attempt shall not be wanting.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou feelest and thou givest pain—both vainly.
I pray thee leave me.

ARKAS.

'Tis to pain I trust,
it counsels wisely.

IPHIGENIA.

It torments my soul,
but lessens not my rooted strong repugnance.

ARKAS.

Why should a noble bosom feel repugnant
to benefits which flow from generous hands!

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Why not? when the kind offices are meant
not to obtain my gratitude, but me.

ARKAS.

He who is disinclin'd will never want
excusing words. I'll mention to the prince
the things that happen. Wouldst thou but revolve
how nobly he has us'd thee, from the hour
of thy arrival to the present day.

[*goes.*

IPHIGENIA.

In evil hour the speeches of this man
have turn'd me back upon myself. I shudder.
For as the stream, by sudden torrents swell'd,
covers the rocks, that lie among the sand
upon its brink, so tides of joy o'erflow'd
my soul. I grasp'd impossibility.
'Twas as another silver cloud descended
gently to heave me from the earth, and rock me
into such slumbers, as involv'd my sense
when the kind goddess snatch'd me from destruction.—

M 2

My

My heart was wholly center'd on my brother,
 I listen'd to his friend's advice alone,
 my soul was only anxious how to save them :
 and, as the seaman gladly turns his back
 to the rude rocks of desert isles, I put
 the thoughts of Tauris from me. Now the voice
 of this plain honest man again awakes me,
 and I perceive that those are also men
 whom I abandon. Treachery resumes
 her ugliest form. Be calm, my trembling heart,
 will doubt and indecision tear thee now ?
 Thou must forgo a land of lonely safety
 to beat about upon unsteady waves—

IPHIGENIA & PYLADES.

PYLADES.

Where is she ? that my winged words may bear her
 the welcome message of our near escape.

IPHIGENIA.

Thou seest me full of care, and needing much
 the comfort that thy presence promises.

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

Thy brother is recover'd. We have walkt
 along the rocks of the unhallow'd coast
 in chearful converse, nor observ'd a change
 where not o'ershadow'd by the sacred grove;
 and with increasing glory round his brow
 the rosy light of youth and beauty plays.
 Courage and hope sit beaming in his eye,
 and his expanding heart is all unlockt
 to the transporting pleasure of delivering
 thee, his deliveress, from thy banishment.

IPHIGENIA.

Heaven bless thee, and may thy auspicious lip
 ne'er know the tone of sorrow or complaint!

PYLADES.

I bring thee more—for Fortune, like a princess,
 walks not abroad alone and unattended.
 We found up our companions; in a nook
 among high masking rocks they had conceal'd
 the ship, and lay in painful apprehension.
 They saw thy brother, and with shouts of joy

flew

flew to receive him, and their restless zeal
 demands an early hour for our departure.
 Each hand seem'd eager for the oar, and, lo !
 a favourable gale by all perceiv'd
 spread from the shore its lucky-omen'd wing.
 Then let us hasten to the temple : guide
 my footstep, priestess, to the sanctuary,
 that I may seize the object of our wishes :
 my single shoulder shall suffice to bear
 the statue of the goddess from its shrine.
 I feel impatient for the honour'd burden.—

[He approaches the fane without perceiving her unwillingness—then looks back.]

Thou standest quivering—tell me—why this silence ?
 Thou lookst confused—does any new misfortune
 withstand our happiness ? Hast thou neglected
 to send the king the cautious, prudent message
 that we agreed upon ?

IPHIGENIA.

No, thou dear man.
 Yet thou wilt frown ; and even now I read
 silent reproof upon that clouded brow.
 The monarch's messenger has just been here.

I told

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I told him what thou hadst suggested to me.
He seem'd astonisht, earnestly besought me
to make the king acquainted with my project :
and now I wait his answer.

PYLADES.

That was wrong.
Danger again o'erhangs us. Why not rest
upon the privileges of thy offices ?

IPHIGENIA.

I never have employ'd it as a cloak.

PYLADES.

Thy scruples, spotless soul, will ruin us.
Why did I not foresee this accident,
and furnish thee with means to ward it off ?

IPHIGENIA.

Blame me alone. I feel the fault is mine ;
yet to an earnest serious request,
whose fitness my own heart was conscious of,
I could not give a different reply.

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

This wears a threatening aspect. Let us not
 therefore be downcast, nor with headlong haste
 betray ourselves. Wait thou the man's return,
 but persevere whatever his reply,
 for it behooves the priestess, not the prince,
 to choose and fix the lustral rites. In case
 he should require to see the man afflicted
 with horrid madness, do not grant it him;
 pretending that thou hast secur'd us both
 within the temple. This will give us time
 from its unworthy owners to bear off
 the holy treasure. Phoebus smiles upon us,
 and, ere we piously fulfill his orders,
 has given us earnest of his kind protection.
 Orestes is made well. With him the freed,
 conduct us, breezes, to the rocky isle
 where dwells the Delphic god, thence to Mycene;
 that from the ashes of their chilly hearths
 our fathers' gods may rise, in the glad fire
 of their neglected homes again to bask.
 Thy hand from golden censers shall disperse
 their long-miss'd incense.—Thou shalt scatter life
and

and health and blessing on the happy threshold,
atone their favour, and to all thy kindred
dispense reviving blossoms of delight.

IPHIGENIA.

Toward the sunshine of thy pleasant words,
like a young flower, my lifted soul is bent.
How sweet the speeches of a present friend !
Their heavenly influence the lonely man
mourns for repining, in his bosom slowly
thought and decision ripen, which the words
of warm affection would have soon matur'd.

PYLADES.

Farewell. I run to calm our friend's impatience ;
then shall in yonder thicket wait thy signal.
What art thou thinking of? A mournful train
of images is passing on thy brow.

IPHIGENIA.

Forgive me—like thin clouds before the sun
anxieties and cares are floating by.

N

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

Be not afraid. Danger and Fear have form'd
a close alliance: they are old companions:
but 'tis an idle union.

IPHIGENIA.

I consider
those cares as honourable, that would lead me
not to deceive the king, my second father,
with treacherous flight and pillage.

PYLADES.

From a man,
who would have slain thy brother, thou art flying.

IPHIGENIA.

That man is not the less my benefactor.

PYLADES.

What fate requires is not ingratitude.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

'Tis still ingratitude—necessity
may justify

PYLADES.

Thee, both to gods and men.

IPHIGENIA.

But my own heart remains dissatisfy'd.

PYLADES.

Excessive scruple is a veil for pride.

IPHIGENIA,

I am not wont to reason, but to feel.

PYLADES,

Thy feeling ought to teach thee self-esteem.

IPHIGENIA,

The heart is only easy, when unspotted.

N 2

PYLADES.

PYLADES.

Beneath the hallow'd shelter of this temple
 well hast thou fenc'd the inlet of thy heart,
 In life we learn less strictness with ourselves,
 and with the world without us. Thou wilt learn it,
 So strangely fashion'd is the race of man,
 so manifold and complex its relations,
 that none may hope to keep himself unblemish'd
 both to himself and others. Nor are we
 decreed to be the judges of our actions.
 The first immediate duty of a man
 is to pursue the path which heaven points out :
 past conduct seldom he appreciates rightly,
 and hardly ever what he is pursuing.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy words have almost won me to consent.

PYLADES.

Where there's no choice, persuasion is but needless,
 To save thy brother and his friend one way
 is open. Shall we hesitate to take it?

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Yes, let me hesitate—thou couldst not do
to any man, whose benefits had bound thee,
with calmness such injustice as thou counselst

PYLADES.

If we are lost—upon thy conduct wait
the harsh reflections, to despair akin—
I see thou art not us'd to difficulty;
since thou art not dispos'd to purchase safety
by one false speech.

IPHIGENIA.

O for a man's firm bosom,
which, when it once conceives a bold design,
forgoes all obstacles for that alone—

PYLADES.

Thy opposition's vain. The iron hand
of fate commands, and its decided signal
is law supreme. Eternal Destiny
the gods themselves obey in humble silence.

What

What she imposes, bear—what she directs,
perform—the rest thou knowst. I soon return
to take the seal of safety at thy hands.

[*goes.*]

IPHIGENIA.

I must obey him ; for the men I love
I see beset with danger. But, alas !
my own hard lot occasions rival pain,
And may I not retain the secret hope
that I had nourisht in my solitude ?
Shall heaven's curse eternally o'erhang us,
nor blessing ever light upon our race ?
All else declines—prosperity's sweet garland,
life's blooming strength—and shall not curses too
wear out and cease ? And have I vainly hop'd
that here in lonely innocence secluded,
from the misfortunes of my kindred sever'd,
I might one day return with a pure hand
and a pure heart to cleanse and to atone
the deep-defiled dwelling of my fathers.
Scarcely my brother in these longing arms
by the surprising kindness of the gods
is heal'd from furious illness, scarcely comes

the

the long-requested vessel to convey me
 back to the harbours of my native country,
 when deaf necessity with heavy hand
 imposes double guilt, to bear away
 in secret stealth the ancient holy image,
 intrusted to me by the gods themselves,
 and to deceive, betray and cheat the man
 to whom I owe my life, my destiny.
 O may unwillingness not get at last
 the upperhand in my uneasy bosom—
 nor the deep hate that you, ye gods, retain
 against the ill-doom'd race of Tantalus
 fix in my tender breast its vulture-claws.
 Save me and save your image in my soul.—
 That antique household song recurs to me
 (methought I had forgot it long ago)
 sung by the Parcae with a shuddering tongue,
 when from his golden seat great Tantalus
 was hurl'd: they felt for him, their noble friend.
 Their breasts were angry, terrible their song.
 And long ago, when I was yet a child,
 the nurse did use to chant it to us all,
 and we did tremble as we listen'd to it.

Fear

Fear the gods, ye sons of men,
in eternal hands they hold
might resistless. Who shall ask them
how they wield the dreadful trust ?

Whom the gods have rais'd on high
he beware to fear them most !
Round their golden tables glitter
seats that rest on cliffs and clouds.

Thence the guest, if strife arise,
headlong falls disgrac'd and scorn'd,
and in midnight darkness fetter'd
vainly hopes a juster doom.

They upon unshaken thrones
by the golden table stay.
They along the mountain-summits
stride across the yawning deep.

From the fathomless abyss,
where are bound the giant-brood,
groans of anguish climb their heaven
like the fumes of sacrifice.

Oft

Oft the rulers of the skies
 turn the guardian-eye away
 from a long-protected offspring
 of the families of earth.

In the son they oft avoid
 to discern the pleading look,
 and the once beloved features
 which his favour'd father wore.

So the frowning Parcæ sing.
 Low in his sullen prison hears
 the hoary banisht sage,
 thinks on his children's lot
 and silent shakes his head.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

O

ARKAS & THOAS.

ARKAS.

I feel embarrass'd, and I do not know
 whom to suspect, or what ; but plots are thought of.
 Whether the prisoners meditate escape—
 Whether the priestess lends them her assistance—
 'Tis strongly rumour'd that the ship; which brought
 these strangers hither, lurks in some concealment.
 The madness of the elder, these new rites,
 a mere pretence to gain an hour's delay,
 are grounds for strong suspicion and for caution.

THOAS.

Send for the priestess swiftly, and examine
 the'indented coast from yonder promontory
 down to the holy grove. Its sacred precincts
 beware to violate ; but lie in ambush,
 and seize on every stranger who approaches.

[*Arkas goes.*

'My

My anger knows not where to vent itself—
 if on the priestess, whom I thought so good,
 or on myself, who trusted her so rashly,
 and by my mildness form'd into a traitress.
 To slavery a man soon grows accustom'd,
 and learns obedience with ease, if quite
 depriv'd of freedom. Yes! if she had fallen
 into the rude hands of my ancestors,
 and they had spar'd her life—she had been grateful,
 for her mere preservation, would have shed
 the blood of strangers on the ancient altar,
 and thought the task, her duty. 'Tis my kindness
 that raises this audacious spirit in her.
 In vain I hop'd for her attachment. She
 is only bent on independent fate.
 At first she won my heart by flattery :
 now I am arm'd against it, she is seeking
 her ends by fraud and cunning, and has learnt
 to think my oversight an ancient right.

IPHIGENIA & THOAS.

IPHIGENIA.

Me thou wast asking for. What brings thee hither?

O

THOAS.

THOAS.

Why is the sacrifice deferr'd? Inform me,

IPHIGENIA.

I told the reasons much at large to Arkas.

THOAS.

And I would hear them from thyself again,

IPHIGENIA.

The goddess gives thee time for recollection.

THOAS.

The time seems also useful to thyself.

IPHIGENIA.

If thou be predetermin'd to accomplish
thy cruel resolution—wherefore come?
A king, who wills a cruel deed, can find
hirelings now disposed, for gain or honours,
to share the curse of perpetrated guilt,
leaving his presence pure and undefil'd.

Hid

Hid by the louring cloud he plans destruction ;
but meaner messengers bear flaming death
on those poor wretches, whom his anger dooms :
while he serenely sails above the storm
in purer ether, an impassive god.

THOAS.

Wild accents quiver on the holy lip.

IPHIGENIA.

Priestess no longer—Agamemnon's daughter—
to whom, while yet unknown, thy ears have hearken'd—
a princess—stands before thee. Would thy voice
employ her hand in murder ? No : rash king.
I have, from early youth, been taught obedience
first to my parents, then to a divinity,
and willingly my soul fulfill'd the task ;
but to the harsh and savage voice of man
I learn'd compliance neither there nor here,

THOAS.

Not I, but ancient laws command thy conduct.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

How gladly we catch hold of ancient laws,
that can be made the weapons of our passion.
I listen to an older law than thine,
which bids me to withstand thee, which declares
the stranger sacred.

THOAS.

Sure these prisoners
lie near thy heart; for sympathy with them
makes thee forget the common saw of prudence,
the mighty should not be provok'd to anger *.

IPHIGENIA.

Whether I speak or not, thou mayst discern
what is and ever will be in my heart.
And ought not similarity of fate
to call forth pity in the sufferer's breast?
How canst thou blame me then? Their woes were mine,
I knelt, wept, trembled once before the altar,

* —τοις δυνατοῖς

Ὁὐκ ἔρισα πλᾶν.

Sopho, Elec,

and

and early death with solemn terror seem'd
to gird me round—the glittering knife was rais'd
against my living bosom, and my soul
recoil'd within me—clouds o'erspread my sight—
I swoon'd—and a superior arm had sav'd me.
The gracious presents that we owe the gods
sure we are bound to pay to the unhappy.
Thou knowst it—knowest me—and wouldst compel me?

THOAS.

Thy office, not thy king, requires it of thee.

IPHIGENIA.

It is the meanness sure of power to'aspire
to make advantage of a woman's weakness.
Am I not born as free as any man?
If Agamemnon's son stood here before thee,
and thou didst ask an unbecoming thing,
he has a sword and arm, that would defend
the innate freedom of his bosom. I
have only words—but noble-minded men
regard the words of woman.

THOAS.

THOAS.

So do I,
more than thy brother's sword.

IPHIGENIA.

The chance of arms
is changeful, and the prudent combatant
will ne'er despise a foe; for bounteous Nature
deny'd not even to the weak some help
against the harsh and overbearing man.
She taught him cunning, and deferr'd contrivance,
which overtake and overcome at last.
The violent deserve such weapons, Prince.

THOAS.

Prudence and caution mostly baffle fraud.

IPHIGENIA.

But a pure soul disdains them all alike.

THOAS.

Beware of speaking thine own condemnation.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

O couldst thou see the combat of my soul
to get the better of oppressive fate !
Lo ! I am weaponless and suppliant ;
but prayer—the branch, that in a woman's hand
is mightier than the sword—I wave in vain.
What more remains to my defenceless spirit—
must I petition miracles of heaven—
or have I yet resources in myself ?

THOAS.

Methinks thou art most singularly anxious
for these two strangers. Tell me who are they,
for whom thy soul is moved so violently.

IPHIGENIA.

They are—they seem—I doubt not they be Greeks.

THOAS.

Who have reviv'd thy wishes of return—

P

IPHIGENIA,

IPHIGENIA; after pausing.

Has man alone the privilege of daring?
 May only his heroic breast aspire
 to clasp the impossible? What pass for great—
 what actions heave the breast of the relater
 with still repeated throbs—but those begun
 by boldness with improbable success?
 Shall he, who steals by night among the foes,
 to wrap their tents in unexpected flame,
 or make their horses bearers of his booty,
 alone be priz'd? Shall only he, who scorns
 securer paths to roam amid the desert,
 and bind the robber in his lurking-place,
 be crown'd with honor? Must a tender woman
 forgo the innate softness of her sex,
 be wild among barbarians, wield a sword,
 like a fierce Amazon, by blows and wounds
 to ward oppression off?—My rising soul
 feels prompted to a nobler enterprize.
 Reproach and heavier evils press upon me
 if I succeed not.—At your feet I lay them—
 Are ye, as ye are call'd, the gods of truth,
 by your protection show it. Honour truth

in

[III]

in me.—Great king, deceitful plots are ripening;
 it is in vain to ask the prisoners
 they're wander'd hence in search of their companions,
 who, with their vessel, lurk along the shore.
 The elder, seiz'd by horrid madness here,
 but who is now recover'd, is Orestes,
 my brother; with him was his worthy friend,
 his confidential long-lov'd Pylades.
 From Delphos to this coast Apollo sent them,
 bad them bear off the image of Diana,
 and bring the sister thither; and for this
 he promis'd him deliverance from the Furies
 that haunt him since the hour his mother fell.—
 Now I have given us both into thy hands,
 the only remnants of the race of Tantalus,—
 destroy us—if thou can.

THOAS.

And dost thou think
 that the rude Scythian the barbarian hears
 the voice of truth and of humanity
 which the Greek, Atreus, heard not?

P 2

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

It is heard

by all, beneath whatever climate born,
thro' whose warm bosoms flows the stream of life
pure and uncheckt.—What art thou thinking of?—
What art thou brooding in thy silent soul?
O, if it be destruction, kill me first!
For now, that their escape is render'd hopeless,
in all its terrors I behold the danger
to which I have expos'd the men I love.
Soon I shall see them bound before my face—
How shall I dare to bid a last farewell
to the dear brother whom I murder? Never
shall I be able on his much-lov'd eye
to fix my looks again—

THOAS.

With cunning fables
these young deceivers play upon thy wishes,
and weave a glittering web of falsehood for thee.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

No: I am not deceiv'd; they're true and honest,
 Shouldst thou not find them so, then let them fall;
 and banish me for loose credulity
 to the black rocks of some deserted island.
 But, if he be my dear, my long-wisht brother,
 let us depart—extend the generous kindness
 that thou hast shown the sister to us both,
 My father, by his wife's contrivance fell;
 she, by her son. 'The last and only hope
 of Atreus' line on him alone reposes.
 Let me with a pure heart and a pure hand
 return to cleanse and to atone our home.
 Yes! Thou wilt keep thy word—thou didst declare
 that if return was e'er provided for me
 thou wouldst not bar my flight: and now it is.
 A king, like common men, does never grant
 to gain a transient riddance from petition;
 nor promise what, he trusts, will never claim
 performance; for he feels his elevation
 most, when conferring joy upon the hoper,

THOAS.

THOAS.

Unwillingly, as fire against water
that hissing seeks to overcome its foe,
my anger strives against thy words.

IPHIGENIA.

Let mercy,
like to the holy flame of sacrifice,
o'erhover the rude combat of thy breast;
that I may crown the still and lambent glory
with songs of praise and gratitude and joy.

THOAS.

How often has this voice assuag'd my soul.

IPHIGENIA.

Extend to me thy hand in sign of peace,

THOAS.

Methinks 'tis somewhat soon to ask so much.

IPHIGENIA,

IPHIGENIA.

Why should beneficence demand reflection?

THOAS.

Because good oft draws evil after it.

IPHIGENIA.

And hesitation oft turns good to evil.

Do not deliberate—indulge thy feelings.

IPHIGENIA, THOAS & ORESTES.

ORESTES arm'd, addressing his followers.

Redouble your exertion to repel them.

Few moments are sufficient. Let their croud
not break your ranks : but keep the passage free
for me and for my sister to the ship.

[To Iphigenia, without perceiving Thoas.

Come, we have been betray'd. Our time is precious.
Away directly.

[He perceives the King.

THOAS.

THOAS laying his hand on his sword

In my presence none
lifts with impunity a naked sword.

IPHIGENIA.

Do not profane these shades with violence
and murder. Bid your people to forbear
and hearken to the priestess and the sister.

ORESTES.

Who is this man that threaten'd us ?

IPHIGENIA.

Respect
in him the king, that was my second father.
Forgive me, brother, that my childish heart
has put our fate entirely in his hands.
I have acknowleg'd to him your intentions,
and sav'd my soul from conscious treachery.

ORESTES.

And will he peaceably permit our going ?

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Thy naked sword prohibits a reply.

ORESTES.

Speak then. Thou seest I listen to thy words.

[Orestes sheathes his weapon. Noise of strife without.

*Pylades enters ; and soon after him Arkas, both with
drawn swords.*

*IPHIGENIA, THOAS, ORESTES, PYLA-
DES, & ARKAS.*

PYLADES.

Make haste, our people summon their last efforts ;
but numbers press them slowly toward the sea.
How ! do I find assembled princes here ?
This is the honour'd person of the king.

ARKAS.

Calmly, and as becomes thee, mighty prince,
thou standest among foes : but soon their rashness
will meet due chastisement. Their crew are flying ;
Q and

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and next their ship is ours. At thy command
it sinks in flame.

THOAS.

Hie thee back
and stay our soldiers. Let the foe be spar'd
'till we have finisht speaking.

[*Arkas goes.*]

ORESTES.

I consent.

Go, my dear Pylades, collect the friends
who yet are left us, and await in calmness
the end decreed our enterprize by heaven.

[*Pylades goes.*]

IPHIGENIA.

Remove my cares ere ye begin to speak.
I fear sad strife, if thou be not dispos'd
to hearken, prince, to equity and reason:
if thou, my brother, be not also willing
to damp the sallies of thy warmer youth.

THOAS.

THOAS.

I, as becomes the elder, bind my anger.
Now answer me, how dost thou prove thyself
the son of Agamemnon ?

ORESTES.

Here's the sword
with which he slew the valiant men of Troy—
I took it from his murderer, and besought
the gods to grant the courage, arm, and fortune
of that great king, and a more glorious death.
Choose one among the nobles of thine army*,
and place the best of them against me here.
Far as the endless earth produces heroes
this prayer to no stranger is denied.

* Strabo says of the dispute concerning the possession of Eleia, which was settled by single combat, that it was determined *κατα ἔθος τι παλαιον των Ἑλλήνων*, b. 8. p. 357. so that this defial is not a Gothic and misplaced idea, as a foreign critic would insinuate.

THOAS.

THOAS.

Our ancient customs have preserv'd no trace
of such a privilege.

ORESTES.

From thee and me
then let this novel usage take its date :
an imitating people soon shall hallow
their sovereign's noble actions into law.
Nor let me only for our own deliverance ;
but let a stranger for all strangers fight.
If I should fall—their fate be spoke by mine.
If I should conquer—let no stranger step
upon this shore, on whom the kindling eye
of welcome beams not, and let none depart
uncomforted, unsatisfy'd, unaided.

THOAS.

Young man, thou dost not seem to me unworthy
of those from whom thou claimest thy descent.
Great is the number of the brave and noble
that wait on me ; but even at my age

I have

I have not learnt in war to play the sluggard.
Myself will try with thee the lot of arms.

IPHIGENIA.

No, no. Such bloody proofs, o king, are needless.
Unhand your swords. Think what have I at stake.
Rash combat oft eternizes a man:

if he should fall, the song of praise is his;
but ah! the tears, the never-ending tears
of the abandon'd, the surviving woman
posterity ne'er reckons, and the poet
names not the thousand days and nights of weeping
wherein her anguisht soul with fruitless groans
calls on her hastily-departed friend.—

I had my terrors least a pirate's art
was drawing me from this secure asylum
to sell me into bondage, and my questions
explor'd each circumstance, required tokens,
and now my heart is fully satisfy'd.

See here upon his right-hand is the mark
as of three stars of blood, which, on the day
that he was born, the priest explain'd to mean
some bloody deed to which the gods reserv'd him.

Then

Then on his brow thou seest this crooked scar*—
 Electra, in her hasty headlong way,
 dropp'd him, while yet an infant, from her arms,
 he fell against a tripos—O 'tis he!
 Shall I yet add his likeness to his father—
 and the warm transports of my inmost heart,
 to the abundant proofs of certainty?

THOAS.

But had thy words remov'd my ev'ry doubt,
 and had I tam'd the anger of my breast,
 yet must we fight. I see no chance of peace.
 Thou hast thyself acknowleg'd that they come
 to steal the holy image of the goddess,
 and do ye think that I will see it calmly?—
 The Greek is wont to turn his greedy eye
 upon the distant treasures of barbarians,
 a golden fleece, or horses, or fair daughters;
 but force and cunning have not always led them
 in safety home with their ill-gotten wealth.

* Οὐλὴν παρὰ ὄφρυς ἦν ποτ' ἐν πατρὸς δόμοις
 —σὺ μὲθ' ἡμαχθῆ πύσσων

Eur. Elec.

ORESTES.

ORESTES.

The statue will not be a cause of quarrel.
 We now perceive the error, which the god
 hung o'er our clouded eyes, while hitherward
 he suffer'd us to bend our dangerous course.
 When I besought his counsel and assistance
 to banish the Eumenides, he answer'd :
 " When thy pious hand from Tauris
 " the unwilling inmate brings
 " of the ancient sanctuary,
 " and the sister of my care
 " to the Grecian shore conveys,
 " then thy curse shall terminate."
 We thought but of Apollo's sister then—
 Thou wast the promise of the oracle.
 Thy lasting bonds are broken now. Thou art
 once more, thou holy one, restor'd to us.
 Toucht by thy hand a healing virtue reach'd me :
 and in thy arms for the last time my evil
 seiz'd me, and shook me to the soul, then fled,
 as to its den a snake. I now enjoy
 once more thro' thee the spreading light of day.

With

With awful admiration I contemplate
the councils of the goddess. Like an image
to which the gods unalterably bind
by hidden means the fate of mighty cities,
she took thee, the protectress of thy house,
away, in holy solitude preserv'd thee
to be a future blessing to thy brother,
and all thy kindred. When for us no safety
on the wide earth seem'd left, thou givst us all.—

[*To Thoas.*]

O monarch, let thy soul incline to peace ;
do not prevent her from accomplishing
the purifying of her father's palace :
let her to an auspicious home restore me
and on my forehead place the ancient crown.—
Return the blessings that her coming brought thee.—
Let me enjoy my earlier nearer right.
Cunning and force, the highest praise of man,
fade in the rays of her superior mind :
her truth, her pure affecting confidence
in Thoas' noble soul will be rewarded.

IPHIGENIA.

IPHIGENIA.

Think on thy promise: and let these few words
from a plain, honest tongue, produce their end.

[Taking Orestes by the hand.]

Look on us—'tis not often thou wilt find
an opportunity for such a deed.

Thou never canst refuse us—grant it soon.

THOAS.

Go then.

IPHIGENIA.

Not so, my king. With thy reluctance
unblest and frown'd upon, I cannot go.
Banish us not; but let the friendly ties
of hospitality unite us still;
so shall we not for ever be divided
and torn asunder. Thou art dear to me
as was my father, and the deep impression
for life remains engraven on my soul.
If but the least among thy people bring
his well-known accent back upon my ear,
I will receive him like a god, prepare

R

with

with my own hand the couch for his repose,
 invite him to a seat beside our hearth,
 and question him about thy fate and thee.
 O may the gods shower down upon thy head
 the merited reward of all thy worth,
 thy goodness, and thy mercies ! King, farewell.
 O look upon us, and in answer give me
 one parting salutation : so the wind
 shall swell our sails more gently, and the tear
 of separation, with less anguish burst
 from these moist eyes. Farewell. Extend to me
 in pledge of ancient friendship, thy right hand.

THOAS, giving his hand.

Farewell.

THE END.

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